Behind the screen

Powers of suggestion

Each week in *Mind Control* Derren Brown has presented us with mind games we can play at home. In the first episode, he asked us to think of two shapes, one inside the other, and to give each a colour, then amazed us by revealing the very colours and shapes that were in our minds.

This week Derren performs a similar feat when, at his subtle command, crowds at the Whitgift Shopping Centre in Croydon unwittingly raise their hands. The bemused shoppers stop and look around, unaware of why their hands have suddenly shot up in the air. In both instances Derren knows just what the outcome will be and why any group of people will react almost exactly as he wants them to.

Conditioned response

Commonly referred to as 'thinking inside the box', this form of mind control underpins most of the others. Psychologists, hypnotists and mentalists base their work on the theory that we are conditioned by society to think and act in certain ways. 'We learn suggestibility from an early age,' says Derren. 'We have to learn that if we touch a flame, it will burn. We pick up this kind of thing subconsciously so that next time we know not to touch.'

This theory is the basis of the work of authors Laurie Nadel, Judy Haims and Robert Stempson who, in their book *The Sixth Sense*, explore the relationship between intuition and logic. 'From earliest childhood we are praised and rewarded for performing mental feats involving logic, memory and other measurable cognitive skills,' they say. 'The entire foundation of our traditional education system is predicated on the belief that these skills are superior to other mental abilities such as imagination and intuition. Thus you learn early on in life to programme your mind to use only a limited part of its ability in performing tasks.'

Trained to obey

This issue of authority is central to why most of us are inclined to think 'inside the box'. As Derren points out, 'It's important to learn how to make patterns and generalise but through it we also learn unquestioning suggestibility and authority. This leads us to accept what societal figureheads such as parents, teachers, tutors and doctors say – and even find ourselves offering their opinions as our own.' It was on this basis, then, that Derren was able to condition the shoppers in the Whitgift Centre to act outside their own free will. 'I used the tannoy as a subtle form of authority,' says Derren. 'As people are not really paying much attention to it, their subconscious takes over.'

Authority and imagination

Does 'thinking inside the box' seem to you a perfectly viable go-with-the-flow option? Or does it bring on the horrifying realisation that you need to get out more? Whatever your reaction to it, don't switch your TV set off yet. According to Derren, we should really be hoping for a mixture of both. 'Ingrained patterns are something we all need to learn for our own safety and development,' says Derren, 'but they can be limiting so sometimes we need to think *outside* the box. That way we can learn to be more creative and challenge our limitations.'

Further information

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Books

The Sixth Sense by Laurie Nadel, Judy Haims and Robert Stempson (Prion Books, 1996)
Explores how intuition relates to logic and other ways of thinking and includes interviews with Francis Ford Coppola, Oliver Sacks and Roger Speery and other celebrities, together with practical exercises for improving intuition. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

How to Develop your Sixth Sense by David Lawson (HarperCollins, 2001)
The author argues that we may all have the potential to develop our psychic and intuitive abilities and offers exercises to develop the powers of your mind. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Body Language: How to read others' thoughts by their gestures by Allan Pease (Sheldon Press, 1997)
What people say is often very different from what they think or feel. Body language can tell you if someone is lying and give you an insight into what they're really thinking. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Reading People: Secret tips that will change your life by Jo-Ellan Dimitrius (Vermilion, 1999)
Teaches the reader how to tell a person's sincerity by the tone of their voice, which character traits are most likely to determine a person's behaviour and the message you are sending with your hairstyle! **Buy this book from Amazon**.

I Know What You're Thinking by Lillian Glass (John Wiley & Sons, 2002)
An easy-to-follow guide to reading people, understanding what they are really thinking and gaining an insight into their personality. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Obedience to Authority by Stanley Milgram (Pinter & Martin, 1997)
Milgram's classic 1961 experiment revealed that, if conditioned to obey authority, as most of us are, we are capable of inhuman behaviour. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Websites

Coercive Persuasion and Attitude Change
www.rickross.com/mind_control.html
A warning about how cults brainwash their followers, with sections on how to deal with leaving a cult.

The Man who Shocked the World
www.psychologytoday.com/htdocs/prod/ ptoarticle/pto-20020301-000037.asp
Describes the classic Stanley Milgram experiment carried out at Yale University in the early 1960s, which showed that most people will obey authority to the point of sadism.

Skepdic
www.skepdic.com/mindcont.html
Good article on mind control, brainwashing and the power of suggestion.

Behind the screen

Seeing the future

Clairvoyance is a subject that's guaranteed to generate argument. While some people ridicule the idea that anyone can look into a crystal ball and see the future, others tell amazing stories of fortune tellers who knew everything about them the minute they sat down. Even the cynics can't help being fascinated by tales of inexplicable insights and predictions. But how can a stranger know things about us that no one else knows apart from ourselves? How can they guess what work we do and describe our hopes and fears within seconds of meeting us?

In general terms

According to Derren Brown, it's easy – but it's not fortune telling. When, in this week's episode, Derren walks through London's Carnaby Street stopping people at random and instantly exposing intimate details about their lives, he is not calling upon some mysterious psychic gift, but is using a form of mind control referred to as 'cold reading'. A well-known mentalist technique, Derren explains, 'Cold reading is when you look for responses in someone in order to narrow down possibilities. It's more of a linguistic trick: you talk to someone apparently about them but using general language that applies to everyone.'

Astrology is a good example of this where, Derren says, 'Generalisations, are used. "You're an extrovert with a shy side," could apply to absolutely anyone. You hear the things you want to hear and not those that you don't.'

Deductive reasoning

A variation of the technique can also be used to 'read' a person's life. 'When I stopped the security guard,' says Derren, 'it was more a form of deductive reading that I was using. For instance, if you look at someone's belt and it seems that they have it on a tighter notch than normal, you can see they have lost weight recently and so are probably into health and fitness. I also put myself in their shoes: what would it feel like to be them. I looked at the security guard and felt how he would like to be moving around, have space about him. It's making deductions from looking at clues,' he concludes, 'rather like Sherlock Holmes.'

We hear what we want

This was the technique used by the renowned 1940s American circus impresario and skilled psychological manipulator, P T Barnum. The eminent psychologist, B R Forer conducted a series of tests to investigate what he termed the 'Barnum effect', and concluded that 'people tend to accept vague and general personality descriptions as uniquely applicable to themselves

without realising that the same description could be applied to just about anyone.'

Handing out the same personality description to each of his students, Forer asked them to mark the accuracy of the description in relation to their character on a scale of 0 to 5, with 5 signifying an excellent assessment. The students' evaluation averaged at 4.26. The same test carried out today, still produces an average mark of 4.2.

Further information

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Books

Arts of Deception: Playing with fraud in the age of Barnum by James W Cook (Harvard University Press, 2001)
Explores some of the playful forms of fraud that astonished and outraged 19th century America's emerging middle class. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

The Elusive Quarry: A scientific appraisal of psychical research by Ray Hymann (Prometheus Books, 1989)
An analysis and critique of parapsychological experimentation. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Flim-Flam: The truth about unicorns, parapsychology and other delusions by James Randi (Prometheus Books, 1994)
A professional magician exposes the tricks of 'mystics', 'mediums', 'psychic surgeons' and others who claim to possess supernatural or paranormal powers. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

The Skeptic's Dictionary: A collection of strange beliefs, delusions and deceptions by Todd Carroll (John Wiley & Sons, August 2003)
A compendium of all things supernatural, occult, paranormal and pseudoscientific. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

I Know What You're Thinking by Lillian Glass (John Wiley & Sons, 2002)
A practical guide to understanding what people are really thinking and gaining an insight into their personalities. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Websites

The Forer Effect
www.skepdic.com/forer.html
Describes the work of psychologist B R Forer who concluded that people accept vague personality descriptions as uniquely applicable to themselves without realising that they could be describing just about anyone.

Cold Reading
www.skepdic.com/coldread.html

Article on techniques that get a subject to behave in a certain way or to think that the cold reader has a mysterious ability to know things about the subject.

Cold Reading: The psychic's true power
www.theness.com/coldread.html
Online article by Robert Novella, published in the journal *The Connecticut Skeptic*.

The Forer Effect
http://atheism.about.com/library/glossary/paranormal/ bldef_forereffect.htm
Describes the experiment that psychologist B R Forer carried out on his students in 1948 plus other related articles.

Skeptic's Journal
www.skeptics.com.au/journal/coldread.htm
Australian site on the art of cold reading.

Behind the screen

The art of distraction

In this series of *Mind Control*, Derren Brown has used his amazing psychological techniques to surprise, delight and, above all, entertain us. However, he has also shown how easily we can be conned. This may be for good, as in the pain control programme, or for bad, as when Derren tricked the confused cashiers at the dog track with the winning-ticket swindle.

Diversionery tactics

This week's episode sees Derren illustrating one of the oldest psychological tricks in the book: picking pockets. 'Pickpockets are masters of psychological manipulation and control,' says Derren. 'Though they are gone in an instant, what they are doing when they steal from you is using a psychological version of visual misdirection – controlling your attention. For instance, they might focus your attention by 'accidentally' touching one wrist, so you're not paying attention as they slip your watch from the other.' Crowded trains make an ideal pickpocketing opportunity. As people press up against you, you are less likely to feel alarmed if someone happens to squeeze the pocket containing your wallet or purse.

Another well-known trick thieves employ is to pretend that they have dropped something, then start scanning the ground. The chances are that you will, too, and while you're distracted, they are helping themselves to your wallet. But though some pickpockets are simply opportunists, real street thieves spend years mastering the art of distraction.

Baffling speed

The young man whom Derren continually pickpockets at the train station, for instance, doesn't notice what's happening to him even though it seems perfectly obvious to the audience. But in a similar situation, most of us would be just as easily stripped of our possessions. As the baffled commuter admits, 'I didn't really know what was going on – it was so quick I didn't notice.' This is because, as anti-street crime experts will tell you, the age-old scam of picking pockets has survived simply because human beings usually focus their attention on one thing at a time. Distract them with something else, and they will soon forget about their wallets, jewellery and other valuables.

Charm offensive

However it doesn't even take someone to dip into your bag to scam you out of your hard-earned cash. Even the most vigilant traveller can find their judgement suspended by the 'psychological misdirection' techniques of a manipulative salesperson. Derren says when he first approached the commuter at the station: 'I wanted to see how boldly I could fleece someone,

while being as charming as possible, so I kept him slightly bewildered with a series of instructions and questions which rendered him very suggestible.'

This is how hard-core salesmen operate, says, Derren. 'They draw your attention to another area of choice such as what colour you want, presupposing that you have already agreed to buy an object,' he says. 'By getting you to focus on the peripheral areas, they bamboozle you into thinking you are getting more value for money.'

You have been warned ...

Further information

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Websites

True Magic
www.truemagic.com/none/obvious.html
Intriguing article about the art of misdirection – making someone believe one thing while something else is happening.

Choreographic Misdirection
www.leirpoll.com/choreographic_misdirection.htm
Jarle Leirpoll gives his top tips and techniques for performing choreographic misdirection – using your body movement to direct where the spectator looks.

World Magic Centre
www.worldmagiccenter.com/Theory/TheoryOfMagic.html
Online resource on the theory of magic by Al Schneider. Go to chapter five for a detailed analysis of direction and misdirection.

The Merchant of Magic
http://cnb-host2.clickandbuild.com/cnb/shop/merchantofmagic
An online magic shop based in the UK that supplies magic tricks, books, DVDs and videos to professional and amateur magicians around the world.

DVD/Video

Mastering the Art of Watch Stealing with James Coats
http://cnb-host2.clickandbuild.com/cnb/shop/merchantofmagic
Watch-stealing expert and professional magician, James Coats, demonstrates the secrets of his craft in this DVD.

Memories are made of this

Most of us associate card tricks with the kind of sleight-of-hand conjuring that anyone can do if they practice hard enough – the traditional mainstay of party entertainers. In this week's episode of *Mind Control* Derren Brown transforms this tradition, imbuing it with a darker and altogether more lucrative edge.

Taking his place alongside three other gamblers in a prestigious London casino, Derren wins at blackjack continuously, beating not only his fellow players but outwitting an increasingly suspicious croupier, who is forced to admit that Derren is almost breaking the bank at her table. 'I've never seen this happen before,' she says. 'That's just far too lucky.' One of Derren's fellow players observes astutely: 'If he had been taking risks, he would have lost as well as won – but he just won.'

Keeping track

This is the key: Derren was not taking risks. In fact, he knew *exactly* what he was doing, predicting every card before it touched the table. 'If you can keep track of the cards which are being dealt, you have the advantage of knowing whether the remaining cards are of a useful value,' says Derren. 'As the game progresses, I am following each player's hands and keeping track of the cards being dealt.' But while Derren is off cashing in his chips, the other players must have been wondering how on earth he does it.

Rules for remembering

The secret behind Derren's seemingly astounding feats of memory is actually quite simple. Using the centuries-old theory of mnemonics – the art of improving memory using an identifiable system of rules – Derren is showing us mind control at its most effective.

There are records of people using mnemonics to improve their memory and sharpen their mind as far back as ancient Greece. An anonymous work from 82 BC, for instance, refers to a visual memory aid in which the mind uses locators such as buildings in which to carry symbolic pictures or objects. These are then attached to the facts to be remembered, so creating a 'memory room'.

In the mind's eye

Describing how he uses this method, Derren says, 'I visualise a sprawling Florentine house. In that house there are memory rooms, each yielding information I place there to remember. When I play cards, I visit the card room on the top floor. In it there are 52 objects, each with a mnemonic link to a playing card. A clock set at seven, for instance, represents the seven of diamonds. As cards are dealt on the table I move quickly to the relevant object and remove it. This means I can see at a glance which cards are left and then know when to play for high stakes.'

The croupier at the casino has a less positive perspective on Derren's card skills: 'I can see why Derren Brown is bad for casinos,' she says, adding wryly, 'I think if he came here again, he would be asked to leave – politely.'

Further information

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Books

Maximise Your Memory by Jonathan Hancock (David & Charles, 2000)
Instructions, illustrations and sample exercises that show you how to build a system of personalised frameworks for storing and recalling information on demand. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Secrets of Mind Power by Harry Lorayne (Frederick Fell, 1999)
Guide to memory techniques and methods to improve concentration, thinking and problem-solving skills. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Better Bridge with a Better Memory: How mnemonics will improve your game by Ron Klinger (Cassell, 2002)
This guide shows how using mnemonics can help your game by improving your memory. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Metaphors of Memory: A history of ideas about the mind by Douwe Draaisma, translated by Paul Vincent (Cambridge University Press, 2001)
Memory is essential to our sense of identity and throughout the ages philosophers and psychologists have used metaphors as a way of understanding it. This book takes you on a guided tour of metaphors of memory from ancient times to the present day. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

History and Memory in Ancient Greece by Gordon Shrimpton (McGill Queens University Press, 1997)
A study of the effects of memory and mnemonics on early Greek historical writing when, argues the author, ancient historians saw memories about public events as public possessions **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Websites

Memory Master
www.vlaardingen.net/~tom/Mainmenu.htm
Online training course that aims to demonstrate the power of human memory and teach you how to dramatically improve it.

Memory Techniques and Mnemonics
www.demon.co.uk/mindtool/memory.html

Lots of articles on techniques to improve your memory, including a section on how to remember playing cards.

The Memory Expansion Channel
www.brainchannels.com/Memory/history.html
Goes back to 516 BC to explain the history of the art of memory.

Illusion or miracle?

Anyone watching Derren Brown as he baffles casino croupiers with never-ending winning streaks or inflicts sudden toothache on medical students, asks: 'How does he do it?' The feats Derren performs are not just perplexing, they seem downright impossible. Is he a mindreader, a miracle-maker or simply a super-sophisticated magician?

'The thing people tend to call me is a psychological illusionist,' he says. 'I suppose I employ a variety of different techniques and approaches to what I do but it's mainly a mix of hypnosis, magic and the power of suggestion. But then I prefer to avoid labels. I started off as a hypnotist but I didn't want to perform it professionally, even though I had a real interest in it ... Then I did some magic for a while but, rather than doing sleight-of-hand things, I became more interested in psychological techniques and veered more and more into that area.'

Language of the mind

Derren says that there is no real name for what he does, though it has some characteristics of what other performers call 'mentalism'. This draws on the idea that we are all born with basic thought structures in place and are conditioned to rely on intuitive forms of communication – a kind of universal body language, if you like. Derren has referred to this simply as 'thinking inside the box'. He has spent years studying these universal responses, learning their 'secret language' as a way of tuning in to our thoughts, and thereby appearing to read our minds.

Harder than it looks

Sounds easy, doesn't it? But while even Derren would admit that what he does is 'not down to natural talent' and that, in theory, anyone could do it, he is keen to point out that it took years to develop his skills. 'It's all about working at it,' he says. 'It took me 10 years to learn this stuff.' Uri Geller also believes that 'psychic powers' are only an extension of our normal powers, and that everyone has the capability to possess them. For him, it's all about concentration, which is rather like working out in the gym. 'If you lift weights for a day or two,' says Geller, 'nothing happens. But if you lift weights every day for one or two years, then you will see the change.'

But although these performers share certain approaches, each act is unique to the individual. Sheer force of personality is key. 'It's very rewarding to see what one can achieve without any fakery at all,' says Derren, 'but I also have a few things of my own design that I use to help me along the way.' What really matters, he believes is 'how you commit to the material; what you decide to believe you are doing, regardless of what the actual real-life method might be.' Ultimately, he says, the answer is to 'be inspired to go your own way and think originally in line with who you are.'

A long tradition

Performers like Derren and his contemporary David Blaine have undoubtedly been inspired by the likes of Harry Houdini, probably the most famous illusionist of them all, who attracted worldwide attention through his famous public feats of escapology in the early 1900s. Acts of psychic phenomena however, were recorded as early as the 1600s, when they were commonly viewed as witchcraft or sorcery.

By Victorian times, psychology was becoming increasingly significant in medicine, and psychic happenings were often attributed to the subconscious mind. This was thought to be particularly true of people who had experienced some sort of emotional trauma. The Victorians believed that shock resulted in an unconditioned part of the brain – the subconscious – taking over and was thought to explain some people's apparent ability to make crockery fly around a room.

Beyond belief

'There can be no doubt of the fact that when suggestion is actively and intelligently employed, it is always effective ...' said Thomson J Hudson in 1893 in *The Law of Psychic Phenomena*. The Victorian medium Daniel Dunglas Home seemed to have commanded his subconscious or 'free will' to spectacular effect. He became famous for such mind-boggling acts as washing his face in red-hot coals, and floating in and out of the windows of high buildings. The 19th century physiologist Charles Richet, meanwhile, came up with his own explanation for the phenomenon of 'cryptesthesia' – the act of reproducing drawings in sealed envelopes. He said: 'In certain persons at certain times, there exists a faculty of thought which has no relation to our normal means of knowledge.' He labelled this faculty the 'sixth sense'.

Indefinable magic

Sixth sense? Free will? Mentalism? Psychological illusionism? Call it what you like, talents like Derren's are extremely rare. And while Derren and his contemporaries admit to having laboured long and hard to perfect their art, their amazing ability to entertain, fascinate and even terrify us, remains undiminished because what continues to elude us is their magic touch.

Further information

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Books

Uri Geller's Little Book of Mind-power by Uri Geller (Robson Books, 1998) Geller encourages his readers to discover how positive thinking can help to overcome obstacles; to find the secret mind switch that turns off stress; and how to supercharge one's will power. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Uri Geller: Magician or mystic? by Jonathan Margolis (Orion, 1998)
Margolis's biography of the alleged psychokineticist Uri Geller is that of a reluctant believer; he stresses his credentials as a sceptic before admitting that he has become convinced that Geller is something more than a clever fake. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

The Sixth Sense by Laurie Nadel with Judy Haims and Roberts Stempson (Prion Books, 1996)
An enquiry into intuition and its relationship to other modes of thought, such as logic. Interviews with celebrities, such as Francis Ford Coppola, Oliver Sacks and Roger Speery are included, together with practical exercises for improving intuition. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

How to Develop your Sixth Sense by David Lawson (HarperCollins, 2001)
We may all have the potential to develop our psychic and intuitive abilities; this book includes exercises to encourage your unique psychic abilities and techniques to develop the powers of your mind. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

The Life and Many Deaths of Harry Houdini by Ruth Brandon (Pan, 2001)
This biography explains in detail the secrets of Houdini's most celebrated escapes and reveals a man more extraordinary than any of his audience could have imagined. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Mysterious Stranger by David Blaine (Channel 4 Books, 2002)
In his long-awaited first book, David Blaine, downtown hipster and extraordinary illusionist, offers a unique exploration of the mysteries and history of the ancient art of magic. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Websites

Paranormal Phenomena – The incredible powers of D.D. Home
http://paranormal.about.com/library/weekly/aa022403a.htm
Biography of Daniel Dunglas Home, the most celebrated medium of the 19th century.

Harry Houdini – London 1910
www.uelectric.com/houdini/himself.html
Autobiographical piece by the famous showman.

What can you Learn from Body Language?
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/ homepages/PatrickM/EQe_art5.htm
Short article that gives some insight into non-verbal communication.

The Memory Expansion Channel
www.brainchannels.com/Memory/history.html
Goes back to 516 BC to explain the history of the art of memory.

The International Survivalist Society
www.survivalafterdeath.org/home.htm
Lots of articles and book reviews on the paranormal, including the work of 19th century physiologist Charles Richet, who coined the phrase 'sixth sense'.

Pain killer

In this week's episode of Mind Control, Derren invites three medical students to join him at London's Old Operating Theatre for what turns out to be one of his most disquieting performances. Seated within its ominous confines, he asks each of them if they have ever experienced toothache. No sooner has he finished talking about the blinding, excruciating agony, than each student's mouth contorts with pain. Seconds later – on Derren's instruction – the pain is suddenly gone.

Then, confident that his volunteer will feel nothing, Derren threads a needle through the hand of one student. The others in the group are shocked that their friend does not feel any pain or discomfort.

What the eye doesn't see

How then, does Derren have the power to cause or kill pain at will? The answer, he believes, lies in the art of suggestion. 'It's about keeping the mind off the pain,' says Derren. 'Before the needle experiment, for instance, I have convinced the student that his hand is completely numb. Another analogy might be when you are cutting vegetables and don't realise that you have cut your finger until you see blood. As soon as you notice the cut, it suddenly starts to hurt.'

Power of suggestion

This natural anaesthetising technique has intrigued, and in some cases assisted, the medical profession for many years. One of the most perplexing stories is that of the Brazilian Jos rig o became famous in the 1960s for reportedly performing an emergency operation on a dying woman, using a rusty knife. Subsequent operations carried out under similar circumstances, proved just as successful.

These experiences rely on hypnosis as a form of natural pain control. This has become increasingly significant in all fields of medicine and is now used to help alleviate everything from phobias to the pain of childbirth. Hypnosis expert David Spiegel, for example, says that he has been able to help several women experience painless childbirth by 'hypnotising them into concentrating on things other than the forthcoming pain.'

'Pain,' says Derren, 'is a very subjective thing.'

Leave it to the experts

Anyone considering attempting any of Derren's 'pain power' experiments, however, should take note: unless you've spent years honing your technique like he has, don't try this at home; unless you want to lose friends and alienate people, don't try this at parties. And, when it comes to toothache, stick to aspirin for now.

Further information

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Books

The Beginner's Guide to Self Hypnosis by Ursula Markham (Vega Books, 2003)
Informative and easy-to-understand introduction offers a range of self-help techniques from which everyone can benefit. Problems such as smoking, stress, pain and low self-esteem are tackled. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Hypnosis by Linda Temes (Alpha Books, 1999)
A fun, easy-to-follow and responsible guide that shows readers how they can practice hypnotherapy on themselves or others as a tool against such behaviours or disorders as smoking, overeating, insomnia, depression, migraine headaches, impotence and much more. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Self-hypnosis: The complete guide to better health and self-change by Brian Alman (Souvenir Press, 1993)
Addresses many issues that we all have trouble with, to greater or lesser extents, with an excellent chapter on pain control. **Buy this book from Amazon**.

Websites

Hypnosis for the People
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/sci_tech/2002/ boston_2002/1825175.stm
Professor David Spiegel argues that all doctors should know how to use hypnotherapy on their patients, the benefits being effective pain relief and help coping with long-term illness.

The Power of Mind Over Matter
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/325928.stm
A consultant psychologist argues the case for using hypnosis in the treatment of cancer, and a dentist explains why she uses hypnosis to relieve pain in many of her patients.